

National EAS Test

November 9, 2011 2 pm EST

FEMA, in coordination with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), will conduct the first nationwide Emergency Alert System (EAS) Test on **November 9, at 2:00 p.m.** Eastern and will last approximately **3 minutes**.

What is the Emergency Alert System (EAS)?

The National-level EAS is a national public alert and warning system that enables the President of the United States to address the American public during extreme emergencies. Alerting authorities can leverage the State and local EAS to send alerts and warnings to radio and television stations, cable television, satellite radio and television services and wire line providers.

What is Nationwide Emergency Alert System (EAS) Test?

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA,) in coordination with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), will send an EAS test message to all participating radio, television, cable, and satellite providers.

Why do we need a nationwide test?

Although local and state components of the EAS are tested on a weekly and monthly basis, there has never been an end-to-end nationwide test of the system. We need to know that the system will work as intended should public safety officials ever need to send an alert or warning to a large region of the United States. Only a complete, top-down test of the EAS can provide an appropriate diagnosis of the system's performance.

Will the test involve mobile communications devices?

No. The test will involve only those communications service providers – broadcast radio and television, cable television, satellite radio and television and wire line video services – that participate in the EAS.

What Can I Expect to Hear/See?

The Test may look like regular, local EAS tests that most people are already familiar with, but there will be some differences in what viewers will see and hear. The audio message will repeat "This is a test." The video message scroll may not indicate "This is a test." The message will last for approximately three minutes and then regular programming will resume.

Where Will I Hear/See the Test?

On all participating radio, television, cable, and satellite providers (who are called EAS Participants).

When Will the Test Occur?

November 9, 2011 at 2:00 PM (Eastern). The 2:00 PM (Eastern) time was selected to make sure the test can occur during normal business hours across many time zones.

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History of the Emergency Alert System

- The Emergency Alert System (EAS) is a public alert and warning system that leverages the communications assets of terrestrial broadcasters, cable television systems, wireless cable systems, satellite digital audio radio service (SDARS) providers, direct broadcast satellite (DBS) services and wire line video service providers to allow the President of the United States the capability to address the American public during a national emergency.
- This system must be available under all conditions. The system is also used by state and local authorities to deliver important emergency information, such as AMBER alerts.
- The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Weather Service (NWS) regularly uses the system to disseminate emergency weather alerts and advisories.
- The Emergency Alert System (EAS) was created in 1994. It is the latest in a series of alert and warning systems that began with the Control of Electromagnetic Radiation (CONELRAD) program, established by President Harry Truman in 1951.
- The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) created the EAS in 1994 and began enforcing requirements that mandated all broadcast stations to have EAS equipment installed in 1997.
- By 2001, cable systems were required to have EAS equipment installed to override all program channels with a national-level EAS message, also known as an Emergency Action Notification (EAN).

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Key Messages for the Public

- The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) will conduct the first nationwide test of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) on Wednesday, November 9 at 2:00 p.m. (Eastern) and may last up to three and a half minutes.
- On November 9, the public will hear a message indicating that "This is a test." The audio message will be the same for both radio and television.
- A Nationwide EAS Test will help the federal partners and EAS participants determine the reliability of the system and its effectiveness in notifying the public of emergencies and potential dangers nationally and regionally.
- As the Federal, State, tribal, territorial and local governments prepare for and test their capabilities, this event serves as a reminder that everyone should establish an emergency preparedness kit and emergency plan for themselves, their families, communities, and businesses.

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Conveying the Message

- Embed National EAS Test information within the context of State and local EAS public education efforts and preparedness campaigns
 - Provide emergency communications information on websites, newsletters, and/or any available social media
 - Incorporate EAS key messages into family and small business checklists and kits
 - Incorporate specific information and instructions for tuning commercial radios/portable television to receive EAS messages
 - Highlight general EAS and National EAS Test information in National Preparedness Month State-wide and Local Campaigns
 - Engage non-profit partners to incorporate general EAS and National EAS Test information into preparedness campaigns
- Communicate Test information with your Regional, State, and Local Emergency Communications Committees, EAS Participant Organizations, and State and local government agencies
 - Partner EAS Participant organizations, academic institutions, and other State and local agencies in public awareness campaigns to create audio and/or visual public service announcements
 - Send notifications through government employee emails and newsletters to:
 - 911 call centers
 - Public Safety and Homeland Security Departments
 - Transit and Tourism divisions
 - Public Health Sectors
 - Small Business Associations
 - Academic Institutions
 - Tribal Liaison Offices
 - Emergency Management Agencies